



May 3rd, 2007

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Monica Harvey
East Main Street,
P.O. Box 1105
Richmond, VA 23218

Re: Comments on the Draft Consent Order and Draft order for the Mirant Potomac River Generating Station

Dear Members of the Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board:

The Sierra Club wishes to submit the following comments regarding the proposed Draft Consent Order and Draft order for the Mirant Potomac River Generating Station.

The Sierra Club opposes the Draft Consent Order between DEQ and Mirant. Daily predictive modeling is an unreliable method for establishing pollutant emission limits that is also prohibited by federal and state regulations. Moreover, PM_{2.5} has not been included in these modeling predictions. This is unacceptable given the modeled PM_{2.5} exceedances in the surrounding community. In fact, any permit issued to the facility should require NAAQS compliance for all criteria pollutants including PM_{2.5}, and this should be at a level not to exceed that established by an unmodified EPA air quality model (or models) that has been fully evaluated for regulatory applications.

The Sierra Club opposes the Stack Merge Project in the Draft Consent Order between DEQ and Mirant. This project is contrary to the interest of protecting public health and the environment in the D.C metro area. The stack Merge Project will only disperse the pollutants elsewhere, most likely into Arlington and the District of Columbia, which are already in non-attainment for both ozone and PM_{2.5}. In addition, ozone and secondary PM_{2.5} formation from Mirant's NO_x and SO₂ emissions downwind, in the DC metro area and up to hundreds of kilometers from the plant would further aggravate attainment in those areas.

We believe a comprehensive State Operating Permit, rather than a Consent Order should be issued to Mirant by July 1st, 2007. The plant will no longer be needed for electrical reliability after June 2007 and there is no reason to delay further the issuance of a permit.

We oppose the NO_x ozone season limit of 1,600 tons in the Draft Consent Order between DEQ and Mirant. However, we support the lower NO_x ozone season limit of 1019 tons in the Draft Order being proposed by the City of Alexandria, which is the same as the limit DEQ specified in its draft operating permit in 2004.

Sincerely,

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